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AUTHOR	McWilliams, Katie
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ABSTRACT

Cedar Valley College's Barrier Reduction Program for Women (BRPW) offers workshops and individual career consultations to help area women meet their personal needs, increase their knowledge of career opportunities, and realize their individual potential. This descriptive and evaluative report begins by examining the diverse characteristics and needs of mature women in Dallas County, and then outlines the goals, procedures and techniques, marketing plan, program implementation, and support services of the BRWP. Section 2 describes the program's specific objectives, which were to help women: (1) gain self-awareness; (2) identify their marketable skills and training requirements, understand the rewards and problems of returning to school, and select jobs appropriate to their talents and needs; (3) become aware of non-traditional careers and identify job clusters with the most promising opportunities; (4) learn job-seeking techniques; (5) learn job management skills, such as dealing with office politics and stress on the job; and (6) understand the need to integrate dual career values into their family structure. For each objective, specific concepts and skills to be mastered, the activities conducted to achieve the objective, and a summary of participants' evaluations of these activities are provided. After providing an overall summary evaluation of the BRPW, the report concludes with recommendations and a summary of the demographic characteristics of program participants. (DAB)

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FINAL REPORT

BARRIER REDUCTION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN

KATIE McWILLIAMS
CEDAR VALLEY COLLEGE
LANCASTER, TEXAS

June 30, 1982

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DALLAS COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
CEDAR VALLEY COLLEGE

I. Problem Areas, Goals, and Procedures

A. Problem Area

An emphasis toward meeting the changing needs of women in our communities has been expressed for some time by many agents of change. Often, these desires were pointed out by special interest groups such as women's action committees, church groups, women's clubs, and legal aid societies. Their focus has been directed primarily at increasing the overall quality of life for females. These early programs stressed consciousness raising, development of grass roots support, and local funding. Their membership was comprised of mostly upper income, highly educated, white females.

Throughout the 1970's the social movement to increase the contribution of women in all facets of American life continued. Women were seen by many policy makers as a human resource which was not being fully utilized. Efforts to enhance women's self-actualization and productivity were often concentrated in multi-purpose service facilities called Women's Centers. These newly formed organizations developed programs which were general in nature and broad in scope. Often, they were criticized by their constituents as being too general in their program content and having little specific direction. The women's centers found their initial funding efforts difficult to maintain and many throughout the nation simply closed their doors.

Today, in Dallas County, there are many facilities which offer various programs directed at the contemporary female. Some facilities try to develop comprehensive programs aimed at meeting the needs of all females in the City of Dallas. Others, like the Martin Luther King Center, offer specific programs for minority females who reside in their service area. Likewise, many educational facilities offer programs for female students. However, the pilot program for 1980-81 at Cedar Valley College was the only one designed to meet the unique needs of females in south Dallas County.

Any programmatic efforts directed at enhancing the social condition of females in the southern portion of Dallas County must be generic in its approach yet dichotomized in its delivery. This specific procedure is necessary due to the

polarized populations in this locale. A successful program must speak to the common concerns of mature women in these communities, yet be able to meet the specific needs of suburban whites and inner city blacks.

Located close to the suburban city of Lancaster in the southern portion of Dallas County, Cedar Valley serves a diverse social and economic population. The geographic service area of the college reflects both high and low income levels. The suburban city of DeSoto reports rapid growth and high personal income, while the southeast Oak Cliff community of Dallas is characterized by lower incomes and out-migration. Cedar Valley is physically located in a transition zone between moderately dense inner-city black populations and diffuse rural white communities.

Available demographic data reveals that the median age of a resident in Cedar Valley's service area is 35 years. The suburban cities of DeSoto, Cedar Hill, Lancaster, Wilmer and Hutchins report that more than 80 percent of their adult population is married. The inner-city community of Dallas, southeast Oak Cliff, reports that only 50 percent of its adult residents are married. The average local family in the service area is composed of four members. Over 50 percent of the children in these families are of school age or younger. Cedar Valley's service area has the lowest level of educational attainment in the Dallas County Community College District. A majority of the women in south Dallas County work in sub-professional occupations outside the home.

The southern area of Dallas County is reflective of the strong societal shifts which have occurred during the 1970's. The past decade has been witness to substantive changes in American political, economic, and institutional life. One of the many groups which has been greatly impacted by these dynamic events is the American female. Facing an uncertain world filled with new role expectations has been particularly difficult for a special sub-group of females - the mature woman. Her needs have been described in contemporary literature as being diverse, complex, and pervasive.

The service area of Cedar Valley College contains many women who are by age or circumstance considered mature in their societal role. They are working women with children, or whose children have left home. They are career women with no family or women who head single parent families. They are elderly or retired women. They are middle age women who are considering entering the work force for the first time or perhaps considering changing careers. Because of economic or cultural deprivation many of these women have taken on mature roles well beyond their years.

The mature women of south Dallas County have special concerns due to their geographic location. Most of the facilities which are capable of meeting their needs are located far to the north, and simply not available due to financial and time constraints. A limited number of professional women in the higher income levels of the service area have been able to obtain needed professional advice, but consumption of these services has not been widely obtained. The vast majority of women are not professionals. They work at jobs which allow them to meet the traditional responsibilities of a mother or wife, yet bring in income to the home. These non-skilled or semi-skilled jobs have been referred to by Louise Howe as Pink Collar occupations. They are workers, sales persons, waitresses, beauticians and homemakers. The women in the black community occupy jobs which are low in both income and status. Often times these jobs are seasonal and found in the secondary labor market. They are jobs such as domestic workers, maids, cooks, and laundry workers. These women often are the head of the household and the sole source of income for their family. Women who compete in this labor market find themselves the last hired and first fired.[1]

Due to the intense and dichotomized needs of the women in our community, a program was developed at Cedar Valley for 1981-82, in which a comprehensive series of special workshops and individual career consultation were offered.

B. Goal of the Project

As part of its obligation to meet the multiple needs of the mature women of south Dallas County, Cedar Valley College proposed to develop a program consisting of a series of pertinent conferences and individual career consultation for those women who exhibited or expressed a need for it. These special programs were intended to provide a powerful life experience directed to helping mature women meet their personal needs and concerns, increasing their knowledge concerning job and career opportunities, and creating a greater awareness of their self potential.

C. Procedures and Techniques Used

The program was developed through these planned procedures:

1. Format was developed by the Project Director upon review of the pilot program (1981-82), its strengths and weaknesses. The major strength of the pilot program came from its comprehensive approach to seminar offerings and marketing efforts. Thus, a program of varied topics and time frames was planned in order to cater to the various needs of potential participants. An area from the pilot

program which most needed improvement was that of individual consultation. The participants were encouraged to seek aid from Cedar Valley's counseling staff and the Project Director. Many individuals who were unable to attend seminars received career research information and training individually from the counseling staff and Project Director. An informal share group was formed as a means of support for the participants who expressed a need for it.

Program materials were developed for each individual seminar. This included supplementary materials provided by campus and other resources, as well as materials customized for the workshop subject itself.

Program facilitators for each workshop were chosen by the Project Director, following recommendations from advisory board members and other qualified resources personnel. Campus and District staff members were given first consideration. Outside resources were utilized when their level of expertise in the chosen area was deemed qualified by the Project Director.

2. Development of Marketing Plan

Marketing was a vital tool in assuring the success of the program. Procedures for dissemination of publicity were planned for the entirety of the program prior to the inception of the first seminar. Marketing strategies were devised cooperatively by the Project Director and campus Public Information Director.

Mass media provided the most comprehensive marketing services, reaching Cedar Valley's entire service area through radio and newspaper. Brochures outlining the program's schedule and services were disseminated to area businesses, organizations, agencies, and churches, as well as throughout Cedar Valley's campus. Orientation sessions were held with various community organizations and businesses. Informational services concerning the program were provided at an area women's career convention.

3. Program Implementation

A fall program was designed to cater to as many various groups as possible. Seminars and conferences were held off-campus in conjunction with area businesses and organizations. Topics for these conferences were determined by the particular immediate concerns of the groups, within the realm of career exploration and

development. These conferences served as excellent marketing tools for subsequent seminars and the program in general.

In addition, weekend workshops were held on campus, addressing the topics of: human potential discovery, resume' writing, interviewing, launching a small business, exploring the world of careers, assertiveness training, and women's legal rights. The workshops were scheduled in varying time frames in order to make them available to more participants.

The spring program was designed around two seminar series, each consisting of seven three-hour sessions. This series format was utilized to maximize the learning process, allowing the participants to fully synthesize material from week to week and receive feedback when needed. Seminars were scheduled sequentially so that each topic could build upon the one addressed the week before. Topics included: maintaining self-esteem, values clarification, life management skills, assertiveness training, women's legal rights awareness, career options investigation, resume-writing and interviewing techniques development. The class-type structure encouraged the formation of a support group.

The informal share group was extended into the spring. The group adopted a format of structuring discussion around subjects of most concern to participants. The group served as an additional medium for growth for participants. This service also functioned as an extension of the program for meeting needs of women not already involved in the seminar series, thus enhancing marketing efforts for the entire program.

In an effort to reach potential participants not interested in a long-term commitment, a week of special workshops was held on Cedar Valley's campus. Events included special discussion groups, documentary film presentations, panel presentations, and lecture-type seminars. Programs were held in day and evening time frames in order to cater to every need. Topics focused on women in non-traditional careers, particularly in the areas of management, banking, marketing, computer programming and commercial music. Issues such as managing the two-career marriage, coping with major life change, identifying roles, surrounding women entering non-traditional fields and the work world in general were addressed.

Two community programs were held in an area agency and library. These seminars dealt with isolated topics of primary interest to each group. Attendants at these seminars, combined with the community programs held during the fall semester, comprised 72% of the total participants in the program.

The programs' effectiveness was enhanced by the availability of Cedar Valley's support services. All individual academic and a major portion of the career counseling was done by Cedar Valley's counseling staff. The Learning Resource Center and Career Resource Center of Cedar Valley provided all research materials for career exploration. Any audio-visual materials used were provided by Cedar Valley's Media Distribution Department. The Assessment Center provided staff and facilities for the administration of tests exclusively for this program's participants. Consultation concerning financial aid for re-entry students was provided by Cedar Valley's Financial Aid Office. Materials and consultation were provided by Cedar Valley's Health Shop. Cedar Valley's Job Placement Center worked in cooperation with the pilot program in offering available company representatives for interviews which were in line with the desires of the participants. All departments cooperated in the production of materials pertinent to mature women's concerns. Bibliographies, pertinent articles, notes from previous seminars, and other supplementary materials were provided for each participant.

II. Specific Objectives

In order to meet the comprehensive objectives for the project, several specific objectives were formulated:

A. Self Awareness/Evaluation

Mature women will demonstrate increasing awareness of self through open discussion of values, perceptions, priorities, life goals, prior achievements and failures, and feelings.

Concepts/Skills for Mastery:

Mature women should be able to:

1. Find the gap between their ideal self and actual self.

2. Identify portions of their lives considered as top priorities.

3. List strengths as well as weaknesses.

4. Indicate how time management could best be utilized to gain control of life and lead to attainment of goals.

5. Determine what they would like to change about themselves.

6. Demonstrate knowledge of specific goal-setting and attainment techniques.

7. Find and indicate the value of feeling positive about themselves.

8. State individual methods for expanding creativity.

9. Show the value of accepting themselves with their strengths and their weaknesses.

10. Describe and incorporate the importance of risk-taking in changing and, ultimately, creative living.

In order to achieve this objective, the program included workshops/seminars dealing with the topics of discovering potential, developing positive self-esteem, values clarification, life management skills development (goal-setting, time management, coping with change, etc.). In these workshops, participants evaluated themselves in terms of role definition, level of self-esteem, life priorities, goal achievement, adaptability to change, and time management ability. These topics deal with personal development that is vital as a basis for career awareness and development. Written evaluations reflected extreme satisfaction with the workshops (see Figure I).

FIGURE I

Participant Evaluation Of
Self Evaluation/Awareness Workshops

Category	Degree of Satisfaction[1]			
	1	2	3	4
1. Organization	74[2]	26		
2. Relevance to personal concerns	59	41		
3. Ability of facilitator to hold interest	82	18		
4. Desire to recommend workshop to another	80	20		
5. Applicability of material to individual	70	30		
6. Contribution of topic to personal career development	41	54	5	
7. Suitability of time frame	54	43	3	

[1] "1" indicates satisfaction, "4" indicates dissatisfaction

[2] Percentage of respondents

B. Skill Assessment/Training Awareness

Mature women will be able to identify their own marketable skills, training that is needed for acquiring of more skills, where to acquire training, the rewards and problems involved in re-entering the academic world, and which jobs will utilize their particular talents and skills and meet their personal needs.

Concepts/Skills for Mastery:

Mature women should be able to:

1. Identify skills they already possess which are saleable on the job market.

2. Determine what opportunities are available in the vocational area of their choice.

3. Indicate additional training needed to enter the vocational area of choice.

4. Classify the job clusters which will have the most promising opportunities for women in the near future.

5. Select schools and/or other types of training available for the chosen career field.

6. Cite positive and negative aspects of returning to education after several years' absence.

7. List and explain forms of financial aid that are available.

8. Describe several resources available containing career information.

The program included workshops and individual counseling in assessing skills primarily through self-assessment. Interests were identified through the use of standarized instruments, as well as self-assessment. Career opportunities available were explored and methods of researching occupations of individual interest were taught. Statistical information on occupational trends, particularly for women, was shared. Participants learned of resources available for information on educational requirements for particular occupations and institutions offering those programs. Information was disseminated on support services available for the woman returning to school. Cedar Valley's Learning Resources Center and Career Resources Center supplied materials and opened their facilities to the program participants. (Summary of written evaluations tabulated in Figure II.)

FIGURE II

Participant Evaluation of
Skill Assessment/Training Awareness Workshops

Category	Degree of Satisfaction[1]			
	1	2	3	4
1. Organization	80[2]	20		
2. Relevance to personal concerns	62	38		
3. Ability of facilitator to hold interest	70	30		
4. Desire to recommend workshop to another	77	23		
5. Applicability of material to individual	56	44		
6. Contribution of topic to personal career development	53	42	5	
7. Suitability of time frame	57	37	6	

[1] "1" indicates satisfaction, "4" indicates dissatisfaction

[2] Percentage of respondents

C. Alternative Job Opportunities

Mature women will be aware of non-traditional career opportunities available. They will be able to identify the job clusters with the most promising opportunities.

Concepts/Skills for Mastery:

1. Identify the career fields normally dominated by men.

2. List and describe avenues for being trained in the skilled crafts and the opportunities available to women in these crafts.

3. Explain aspects of change involved in undertaking a non-traditional occupation.

4. Deduce all positive and negative aspects for the particular individual in entering a non-traditional occupation.

The major thrust of the program dealing with non-traditional careers was comprised in a week of special seminars held on the Cedar Valley campus. One of the seminars consisted of a panel presentation by four women already working in professions traditionally held by men: banking, computer programming, marketing, and utilities management. These role models provided vital career information from a personal perspective. Participants were able to ask questions that could not be answered only through career research, largely due to the relative newness of women entering these fields. The topic of "Women in Management" was addressed in a forum held by a Cedar Valley business faculty member. Pertinent issues surrounding women in business were discussed, as well as the mechanics of entering business professions. One important issue involved in non-traditional career entry for women, coping with change, was the topic of group discussion. It is believed the combination of all these seminars provided a very comprehensive and realistic view of non-traditional career entry. (Summary of participant evaluations in Figure III.)

FIGURE III

Participant Evaluation of
Alternative Job Opportunities Awareness
Workshops

Category	Degree of Satisfaction[1]			
	1	2	3	4
1. Organization	57[2]	43		
2. Relevance to personal concerns	50	50		
3. Ability of facilitator to hold interest	75	25		
4. Desire to recommend workshop to another	63	37		
5. Applicability of material to individual	57	29	14	
6. Contribution of topic to personal career development	50	37	13	
7. Suitability of time frame	50	50		

[1] "1" indicates satisfaction, "4" indicates dissatisfaction

[2] Percentage of respondents

D. Job-Seeking Techniques

Mature women will be able to identify the most effective job-seeking techniques that make the best use of their individual resources.

Concepts/Skills for Mastery:

Mature women should be able to:

1. Devise a resume' which highlights the individual's strengths as they apply to the job being sought.

2. Explain the purpose, method, and resources available in researching a potential employer.

3. Describe the proper dress, attitude, and posture to be used in a job interview.

4. Identify laws which protect the employee.

5. Determine how much interviewee information to which the potential employer is entitled previous to employment of the job-seeker.

The primary purpose of the Barrier Reduction Project was to provide pertinent career-seeking training for the target population. With this purpose in mind, workshops dealing with specific job-search skills were included in almost every program offered. Facilitators of these workshops approached the career search as a process, including discussion of these topics: comprehensive self-assessment, importance of job market research, investigating potential employers, effective resume'-writing, and successful interviewing methods. Participants were referred to resources in the Cedar Valley Career Resource Center and Learning Resource Center for research information. Those women desiring further individual consultation were referred to Cedar Valley's Counseling Center or to the Project Director.

FIGURE IV

Participant Evaluation of
Job-Seeking Techniques
Workshops

Category	Degree of Satisfaction[1]			
	1	2	3	4
1. Organization	88[2]	12		
2. Relevance to personal concerns	74	26		
3. Ability of facilitator to hold interest	63	30	7	
4. Desire to recommend workshop to another	81	19		
5. Applicability of material to individual	63	37		
6. Contribution of topic to personal career development	66	32	2	
7. Suitability of time frame	59	33	8	

[1]"1" indicates satisfaction, "4" indicates dissatisfaction

[2]Percentage of respondents

E. Job Management Skills

Mature women will be able to list problematic areas which could possibly arise once a job is attained in terms of legal issues, co-worker relations, and personal stress management.

Concepts/Skills for Mastery:

Mature women should be able to:

1. Cite legislation which affects them as women, both personally and on the job.
2. Determine what resources are available for legal help if needed.
3. Explain the workings of informal office politics and how to deal with them.
4. Identify potential causes of stress on the job.
5. List several relievers of stress and alternate behaviors to a stressful lifestyle.
6. Practice relaxation exercises which combat stress.
7. Apply assertiveness techniques in the work situation.

Many of the skills emphasized throughout the career planning process are also important in the management of the job once it is attained. The development of these skills was stressed, focusing on stress management techniques, assertiveness training, and legal rights awareness. Participants learned techniques for combating stress before it hampers job efficiency or major personal disorders, methods of effectively communicating ideas and desires to others, and laws which protect employees on-the-job, whether in co-worker relations or actual performance of job. Role playing was used in order to more effectively teach assertiveness and stress management techniques. (Summary of written evaluations tabulated in Figure V.)

FIGURE V

Participant Evaluation of
Job Management Skills
Workshops

Category	Degree of Satisfaction[1]			
	1	2	3	4
1. Organization	59[2]	41		
2. Relevance to personal concerns	47	50	3	
3. Ability of facilitator to hold interest	59	32	9	
4. Desire to recommend workshop to another	62	33	5	
5. Applicability of material to individual	50	46	4	
6. Contribution of topic to personal career development	33	39	28	
7. Suitability of time frame	45	45	8	2

[1]"1" indicates satisfaction, "4" indicates dissatisfaction

[2]Percentage of respondents

F. Techniques for Social Change

Mature women will be able to understand the need for integration of dual career values into their family structure.

Concepts/Skills for Mastery

Mature women should be able to:

1. Describe and explain the traditional role of women in the labor force.

2. Cite and evaluate the current trends in dual-career families.

3. Develop a sensitivity for the problems encountered by dual career families.

4. Demonstrate an awareness of ways to have an impact on social policies which affect women's occupational choices.

5. Determine the positive and negative aspects of maintaining a two-career marriage for the particular individual's situation.

The structure of society is undergoing a major shift due to the large number of women entering the work force. Women are accepting new roles, requiring adjustment by society, as well as the women themselves. The major societal changes were addressed throughout various appropriate segments of the program. Topics such as the legal rights of women, entering non-traditional careers, and life management skills development specifically dealt with methods for confronting and coping with these changes. Participants were made aware of society's attitude toward women in the labor force and the importance of giving individual input to affect social policies.

The entry of more women into the work world has impacted the effective functioning of one of society's most vital institutions - the family. As many women who once stayed at home to devote their energies to house and family management are now working, the family structure has undergone several changes. The dual career marriage is becoming the norm in most American households. Learning to make this new structure workable is imperative to career success for married women. Seminars on the topic of issues in the dual-career marriage were held in which problems unique to this situation were discussed. Participants learned of the inevitability of the two-career marriage and its effect upon society. Practical methods for managing the dual-career marriage were suggested and discussed. (Summary of written evaluations tabulated in Figure VI.)

FIGURE VI

Participant Evaluation of
Techniques for Social Change
Workshop

Category	Degree of Satisfaction[1]			
	1	2	3	4
1. Organization	75	25		
2. Relevance to personal concerns	20	80		
3. Ability of facilitator to hold interest	80	20		
4. Desire to recommend workshop to another	80	20		
5. Applicability of material to individual	60	40		
6 Suitability of time frame	-0-	100		

[1] "1" indicates satisfaction, "4" indicates dissatisfaction

III. Evaluation

Evaluation research literature abounds with critical judgments of the quality of most evaluation studies when judged by scientific standards. However, this situation cannot be interpreted to mean that the shortcomings are inherent in the conduct of evaluation studies. From a methodological point of view, key conceptual elements in a definition of evaluations are 1) a planned program of deliberate intervention; 2) an objective or goal which is considered desirable or has some positive values; and 3) a method for determining the degree to which the planned program achieves the desired objective. Evaluation, according to Suchman, asks about the kind of change desired, the means by which this change is to be brought about, and the signs according to which such change can be recognized.

An important goal of evaluative analysis is to find out why a program was or was not effective. This required analysis of 1) the attributes of the program itself; 2) the population exposed to the program; 3) the situational context within which the program takes place; and 4) the different kinds of effects produced by the program, such as cognitive attitudinal or behavioral changes. The analysis of the program must be in terms of its objectives, the assumptions underlying these objectives, the specific program activities designed to achieve these objectives, the rationale for believing these activities are capable of attaining the objective, and the determination of criteria for observing the extent to which the objectives are being attained.

In assessing the project strategy used at Cedar Valley in its program for mature women, a goal-attainment evaluation model was utilized. The goal-attainment model accepts the significance of goal clarification as an integral component in the evaluation process. The evaluation process is described as a circular one. It starts with initial goal setting, proceeds to determine measures of the goal, collects data and appraises the effects of the goal and then modifies the initial goal on the basis of the collected data.

Emphasis was placed on assessing data collected for learning objectives, seminar acceptance, and community impact. Women who attended various seminars were surveyed regarding how well they were able to utilize the presented information and materials. Upon completion of the entire project, each program participant was contacted in order to obtain specific demographic data. This information, in conjunction with additional survey data, will be used to determine if there has been a change in the program participants' personal relationships, family life, income, career, or environmental awareness.[2] (A summary of the demographic characteristics is provided in Table 1.)

CEDAR VALLEY COLLEGE
BARRIER REDUCTION PROGRAM

TABLE I

Summary Table of
Final Survey

(Representative Sample: N=21)

Category	*Percent
Age	
15-20	5
21-30	14
31-40	23
41-50	32
51 +	26
Marital Status	
Married	54
Divorced or Separated	32
Widowed	5
Never Married	9
Ethnicity	
Black	19
White	81
Hispanic	0
Employment Status Before Seminar Attendance	
Unemployed	71
Length of Time Absent From Work Force	
6 Months to 1 Year	80
15 + years	20
Nature of Last Position	
Professional, Technical, Managerial	33
Clerical and Sales	67
Reasons for Leaving Work Force	
Pregnancy	50

*Percentages reflect number of respondents answering that particular question.

Category	Percent
Retirement	25
Business Failure	25
Employment Status Since Attending Seminars	
Employed	50
Nature of Position	
Clerical/Sales	75
Service Occupations	25
Hours Working per Week	
15-20	25
21-30	25
31-40	50
Job Satisfaction	
Very Satisfied	50
Moderately Satisfied	25
Moderately Dissatisfied	25
Employed	
Hours Working per Week	
21-30	14
31-40	71
40 +	15
Nature of Position	
Professional, Technical, Managerial	29
Clerical and Sales	64
Service Occupations	7
Job Satisfaction	
Very Satisfied	7
Moderately Satisfied	21
Somewhat Satisfied	21
Moderately Dissatisfied	21
Very Dissatisfied	30
Job Change Since Attending Seminars	
Yes	19
Nature of New Position	
Professional, Technical, Managerial	50
Service Occupations	50

Category	Percent
Hours Working per Week	
30-40	100
Job Satisfaction	
Moderately Satisfied	100
Extent to Which Seminars Contributed to Obtaining New Position	
Small Extent	67
Not at all	33
Reason for Attending Seminar	
Aid in Job-Seeking	37
Awareness	15
Personal Growth	37
Job Enhancement	4
Educational Information	7

In evaluating the program individually, participants made such comments as:

"I am a different person than the one who attended the seminar... I have a new job which pays well and I am happy with my job. I also have a new outlook on life, a whole new attitude. I left the seminars feeling good about myself with the attitude that I could do anything."

"I would say it was vital to my mental and physical health that I had this program to turn to at the time. The stimulating ideas presented got me thinking, reading, acting instead of brooding and being depressed."

"I learned to evaluate and assess all my abilities in trying to decide on either a job change or maybe a total change in direction in my career."

"It improved my working process."

".. an extremely good program..."

"...helped me gain confidence in myself..."

"...excellent..."

"...very well-spent study..."

"More, please!"

IV. Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations

The major objective of the Barrier Reduction Program for Women of Cedar Valley College was to make career exploration and information programs and materials available to service area women who expressed or exhibited a need for them. In light of this goal, it is necessary to determine the extent to which this need was met.

The nature of the program's objectives requires a considerable time allowance in order to fully evaluate all overt results from participants' attendance at seminars. Concepts shared and taught were such that long-term results would be more evident than short term results. Follow-up must be continued in order to realize the program's full impact.

The strength of the program came from its comprehensive approach to seminar offerings and marketing efforts. Every topic surrounding the needs of the mature woman exploring careers was touched upon. Program facilitators came from diverse professional and personal backgrounds, but all had a common interest in women learning to cope in the work force. Seminars were offered in various time frames, covering large spans of time, in order to allow for every time schedule. Every form of marketing tool available was utilized in order to reach any potential participant. Using this approach attracted women from all areas of the community and all sectors of life. As it appeared that a particular area was not well represented, marketing was focused accordingly.

Women attending the seminars expressed and exhibited an increased level of motivation after becoming involved in the program. This motivation enhanced personal lives, as well as self-confidence and knowledge in job-seeking. It is evident that an awareness of how to realize potential is a necessary prerequisite for career exploration. A strength of the program came from its emphasis on this self awareness/exploration.

Following the implementation of the pilot project, it was determined that participants could gain maximum benefit from the program if more follow-up support was available. In order to meet this need, individual consultation was made available (provided by Project Director and Cedar Valley counseling staff) to program participants and potential participants. The seminar series format was implemented to encourage formation of support groups. As these informal networks were established, more individual needs were met. The informal share group formed allowed participants the opportunity to express concerns or ask questions of the facilitator and other group members. It is believed these mediums were major strengths of the program, supplementing the services and marketing plan, as well.

A weakness of the program lay in the limited amount of actual contact with service area business in reference to job opportunities in non-traditional areas for women. It is believed that program participants need to be encouraged to explore these occupations. Exposure to

employers in these areas would enhance interest and motivation to consider non-traditional career entry. Time restraints have been the major deterrents to alleviating this problem. As the program matures, its functioning will become easier to implement and allow the Project Director more time to devote to establishment of these contacts.

Continuation of the program is recommended and highly encouraged. Described revisions will be made in order to assure another successful program in which participants exhibit increased levels of awareness, knowledge, and motivation to enter the careers for which they are best suited.

END NOTES

[1]Jim Harlow, Barrier Reduction Program for Women, Proposal for Career Exploration and Improvement for Women (Austin, Texas; TEA, 1980), pp. 2-7.

[2]Jim Harlow and Katie McWilliams, Barrier Reduction Program for Women, Proposal for Career Exploration and Improvement for Women (Austin, Texas: TEA, 1981), pp. 18-19.

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges
8118 Math-Sciences Building
University of California
Los Angeles, California 90024

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